

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1. - 96. (Cancelled)

97. (Previously Presented) A connector for connecting a preform, which is for a microstructured fibre and which preform comprises a plurality of holes, to a pressure source, the connector comprising a plurality of chambers, wherein each chamber is arranged to mate with one or more of the holes of a preform, and wherein at least one of the chambers is arranged to mate with a plurality of holes of a preform, and each chamber being connectable to a pressure source.

98. (Previously Presented) A connector as claimed in claim 97, in which different ones of the chambers arranged to mate are connectable, individually or in groups, to different pressure sources.

99. (Currently Amended) A connector as claimed in claim 97, further comprising a plurality of apertures arranged to receive ends of one or more of the tubes of a preform comprising a plurality of tubes, wherein the chambers are arranged so that tubes received by said apertures terminate in said chambers.

100. (Withdrawn) A connector as claimed in 97, in which each chamber is in fluid communication with a passage that is connectable to the pressure source.

101. (Withdrawn) A connector as claimed in claim 99, in which the chambers are distributed in the connector in a plane substantially orthogonal to the direction in which tubes of a preform connected to the connector are intended to pass through the apertures.

102. (Withdrawn) A connector as claimed in 101, in which the chambers are adjacent to the apertures.

103. (Withdrawn) A connector as claimed in 102, in which the chambers are recesses in a side of the connector.

104. (Currently Amended) A connector as claimed in claim 99, in which the chambers are distributed in the connector along the direction in which tubes of a preform connected to the connector are intended to pass through the apertures.

105.-107. (Cancelled)

108. (Previously Presented) A connector as claimed in claim 99, adapted to receive tubes of different lengths.

109. (Previously Presented) A connector as claimed in claim 99, wherein at least one dimension of each chamber orthogonal to the direction in which tubes of a preform connected to the connector are intended to pass through the apertures is larger than the diameter of the individual tubes.

110. (Cancelled)

111. (Currently Amended) A connector for connecting a fiber preform to a pressure source, the connector comprising a plurality of chambers arranged in a

stack, each chamber comprising a base comprising holes going through the base, said holes being arranged to allow tubes of a preform to pass ~~providing passage~~ from the chamber to a neighbouring chamber in said stack, said chambers being connectable to a pressure source.

112. (Previously Presented) A connector as claimed in claim 111, wherein said holes in said bases of said chambers are adapted to allow passage of a tubular shaped object from one chamber to a neighbouring chamber.

113. (Withdrawn) A connector for connecting a preform to a pressure source, the connector comprising a first side and a second side, said first side comprising a plurality of recesses, said connector further comprising passages passing through said connector from said recesses in said first side to said second side of said connector.

114. (Currently Amended) A connector comprising a plurality of sections arranged in a stack extending in a longitudinal direction from a first end to a second end, each section comprising a chamber, a passage in fluid communication with said chamber, and at least one hole, wherein the hole of a section is arranged to provide access to a chamber of that section for at least one tub extending longitudinally from the first end of the stack through to the section, said passage being connectable to an external pressure controller so that the chambers of the different sections can be pressurized to a different pressure ~~including a chamber and a plurality of holes extending longitudinally from the respective chamber in that section through to the first end of the stack, each of said chambers also including a respective passage~~

~~connecting the respective chamber to a port on the respective section so that each chamber is individually connectable to a respective pressure source.~~

115. (New) A connector as claimed in claim 104, wherein at least one of said tubes may pass through one or more chamber and terminate in a chamber arranged further from the aperture than the chamber(s) through which that tube passes.

116. (New) A connector as claimed in claim 104, wherein said connector is designed to receive preform tubes of two or more different lengths, such that the tubes of each length, or within different ranges of lengths, terminate in a different chamber.

117. (New) A connector as claimed in claim 111, wherein each of said chambers being connectable to a respective pressure source.